

# Ekari language

**Ekari** (also *Ekagi*, *Kapauku*, *Mee*) is a Trans–New Guinea language spoken by about 100,000 people in the Paniai lakes region of the Indonesian province of Papua, including the villages of Enaratoli, Mapia and Moanemani. This makes it the second-most populous Papuan language in Indonesian New Guinea after Western Dani. Language use is vigorous. Documentation is quite limited.

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## Phonology

### Consonants

		<span><u>Bilabial</u></span>	<span><u>Alveolar</u></span>	<span><u>Palatal</u></span>	<span><u>Velar</u></span>
<span><u>Plosive</u></span>	plain	p	t		k
	voiced	b	d		g <sup>ʟ</sup>
<span><u>Nasal</u></span>		m	n		
<span><u>Approximant</u></span>		w		j	

The voiced velar stop (g<sup>ʟ</sup>) is pronounced with lateral release. Doble (1987) describes both /k/ and /g<sup>ʟ</sup>/ as being labialized [k<sup>w</sup>, g<sup>ʟ w</sup>] after the back vowels /o, u/ (i.e. *okei* 'they', *euga* 'more'), with *g* having 'varying' degrees of the lateral.<sup>[3]</sup> Staroverov & Tebay (2019) describe /g<sup>ʟ</sup>/ as being velar lateral [g<sup>ʟ</sup>] before front vowels and uvular non-lateral [G<sup>ʁ</sup>] before non-front vowels. When lateral, there is usually a stop onset, but occasionally just [ʟ] is heard.<sup>[4]</sup>

/j/ is a 'more palatalized [ž]' (perhaps [j̟] or [z̟]) before the high front vowel /i/ (i.e. *yina* 'insect').<sup>[3]</sup>

### Vowels

Ekari	
<i>Mee</i>	
Native to	Indonesia
Region	Papua
Ethnicity	Ekari
Native speakers	(100,000 cited 1985) <sup>[1]</sup>
Language family	<div>Trans–New Guinea <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li> West Trans–New Guinea<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Paniai Lakes<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>Ekari</b></li></ul></li></ul></li></ul></div>
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	ekg
Glottolog	ekar1243 (http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/ekar1243) <sup>[2]</sup>



A view of Moanemani, Papua

Both Doble (1987) and Staroverov & Tebay (2019) describe five vowel qualities. Long vowels and diphthongs are analyzed as sequences.

	<u>front</u>	<u>central</u>	<u>back</u>
<u>high</u>	i		u
<u>mid</u>	ɛ		o
<u>low</u>		a	

## Tone

Ekari has pitch accent. One syllable in a word may have a high tone, contrasting with words without a high tone. If the vowel is long or a diphthong and not at the end of the word, the high tone is phonetically rising.

CV words have no tone contrast. CVV words may be mid/low or high. (In all of these patterns, here and following, initial C is optional.)

Words of the following shapes may have a contrastive high tone on the final syllable: CVCV, CVCVV. Words of the following shapes may have either a rising or a falling tone on the first long syllable: CVVCV, CVVCVV, CVCVVVCVV, CVVCVCV (rare), CVVCVCVV (rare). The following word shapes do not have contrastive tone: CVCVCV, CVCVVCV, CVCVCVV, and words of 4 or more syllables.

## References

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1. Ekari (<https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/ekg/>) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
2. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Ekari" (<http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/ekar1243>). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
3. Doble, Marion (1987). *Oceanic Linguistics Vol. 26, No. 1/2*. University of Hawai'i Press. pp. 55–113.
4. Peter Staroverov and Soren Tebay (2019) Posterior Affricate in Mee and Consonant-Vowel Place Interactions, *Proceedings of the 2018 Annual Meeting on Phonology*, LSA

## External links

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Materials on Ekari are included in the open access [Arthur Capell](#) collections held by [Paradisec](#):

- [AC1](http://catalog.paradisec.org.au/collections/AC1) (<http://catalog.paradisec.org.au/collections/AC1>)
- [AC2](http://catalog.paradisec.org.au/collections/AC2) (<http://catalog.paradisec.org.au/collections/AC2>)

## Bibliography

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- Doble, Marion. 1962. Essays on Kapauku grammar.. *Nieuw Guinea Studiën* 6.152-5, 211-8, 279-98.
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